

VERTIGO



FABLES™

103

May '11  
suggested for  
mature readers  
[vertigo.comics.com](http://vertigo.comics.com)

WILLINGHAM · BUCKINGHAM · LEIALOHA

HAVEN.

EARLY THE NEXT  
MORNING...

OH, NO!  
WAKE UP,  
BIGBY! WE  
HAVE TO--

WE  
WERE OUT ALL  
NIGHT!

HUHH?

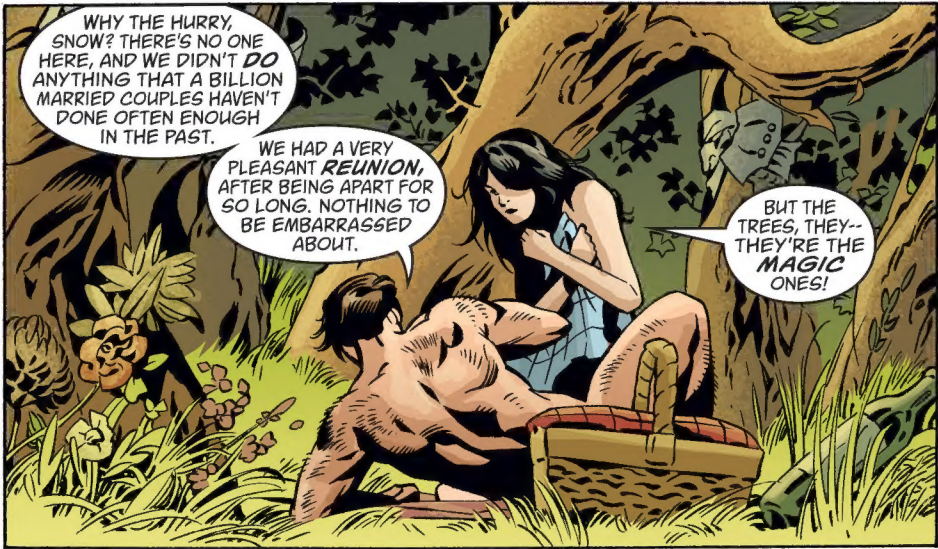
WHUFISS?

WE FELL  
ASLEEP! WE HAVE  
TO GET UP AND GET  
DRESSED!

RIGHT  
NOW!

**BILL  
WILLINGHAM**  
*writer - creator*  
**MARK BUCKINGHAM**  
*penciller*  
**STEVE LEIALOHA**  
*inker*

**LEE LOUGHRIDGE:** *colors*  
**TODD KLEIN:** *letters*  
**JOAO RUAS:** *cover, after Byrne*  
**GREGORY LOCKARD:**  
*assistant editor*  
**SHELLY BOND:** *editor*



WHY THE HURRY, SNOW? THERE'S NO ONE HERE, AND WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING THAT A BILLION MARRIED COUPLES HAVEN'T DONE OFTEN ENOUGH IN THE PAST.

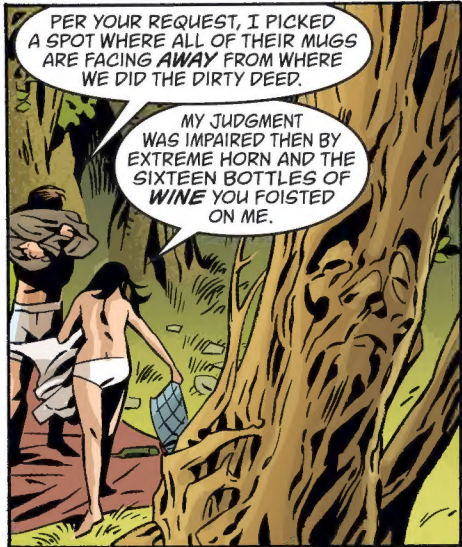
WE HAD A VERY PLEASANT REUNION, AFTER BEING APART FOR SO LONG. NOTHING TO BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT.

BUT THE TREES, THEY-- THEY'RE THE MAGIC ONES!



MOST OF THEM STILL HAVE FACES! WHAT DID THEY SEE LAST NIGHT?

NOT A DAMNED THING.



PER YOUR REQUEST, I PICKED A SPOT WHERE ALL OF THEIR MUGS ARE FACING AWAY FROM WHERE WE DID THE DIRTY DEED.

MY JUDGMENT WAS IMPAIRED THEN BY EXTREME HORN AND THE SIXTEEN BOTTLES OF WINE YOU FOISTED ON ME.



MAYBE NOT THAT MANY.

AND DO THEY HAVE EARS, TOO? DID THEY HEAR US?

I'VE NO IDEA. WHO CARES?



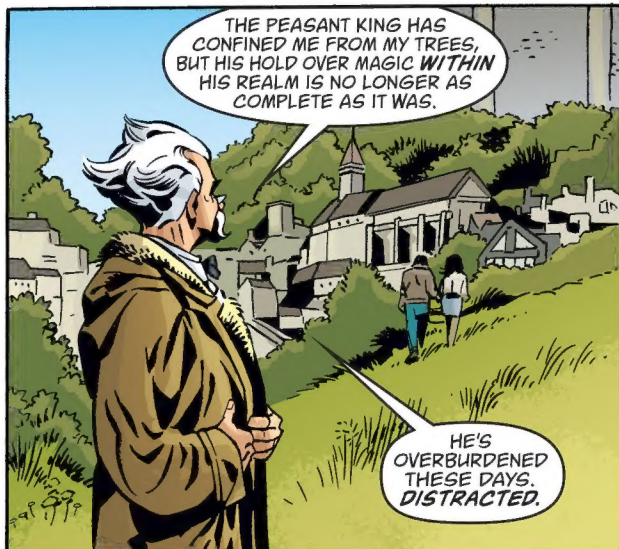
WHO CARES? WELL, I DO, FOR--

--UH--

BIGBY?

YES, DEAR?



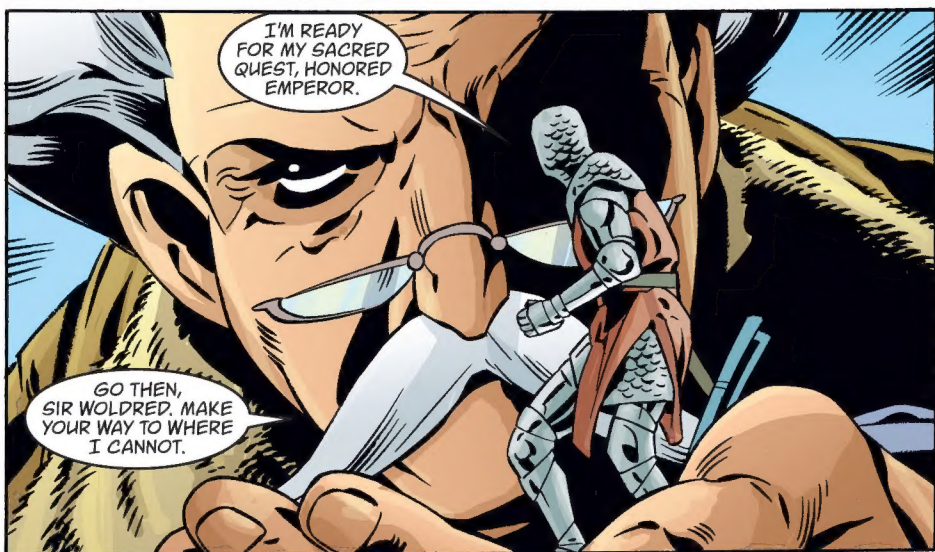


THE PEASANT KING HAS CONFINED ME FROM MY TREES, BUT HIS HOLD OVER MAGIC *WITHIN* HIS REALM IS NO LONGER AS COMPLETE AS IT WAS.

HE'S OVERBURDENED THESE DAYS. DISTRACTED.



MANY OF THE SMALLER DETAILS ARE SLIPPING BY HIM.



I'M READY FOR MY SACRED QUEST, HONORED EMPEROR.

GO THEN, SIR WOLDRED, MAKE YOUR WAY TO WHERE I CANNOT.



SPEAK WITH MY AUTHORITY, WHERE MY VOICE HAS BEEN SILENCED.

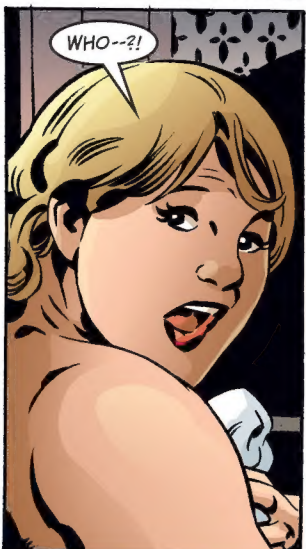
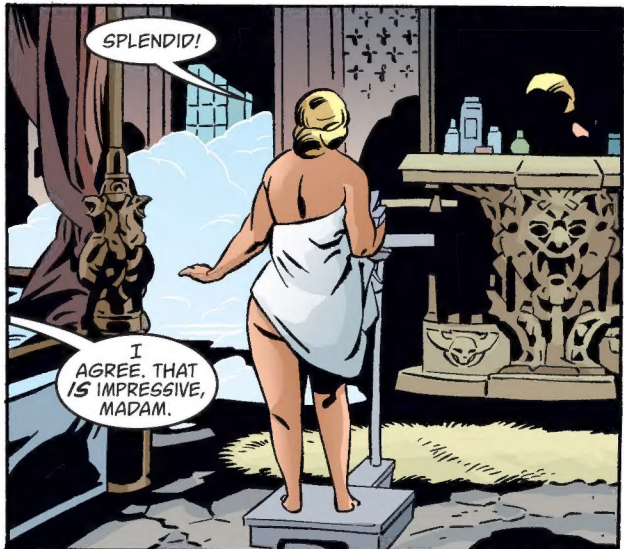
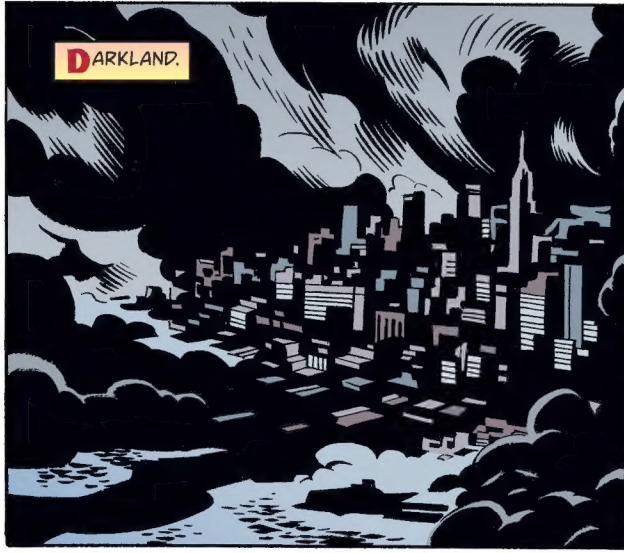


I WILL NOT FALTER IN MY DUTY, SIRE!



TRYING TO VEX ME, FROG KING, IS LIKE ATTEMPTING TO PET A VIPER.

YOU'LL HAVE ONLY *YOURSELF* TO BLAME WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF SORE BITTEN.





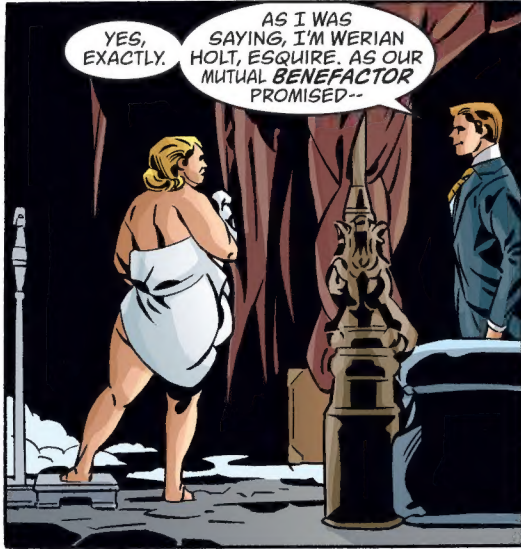
I HOPE YOU'LL PARDON MY UNFORGIVABLE INTRUSION INTO WHAT I CAN CLEARLY SEE NOW IS YOUR *PRIVATE* ROOMS, MRS. SPRATT.

BUT THERE WAS NO ONE DOWNSTAIRS TO *RECEIVE* ME, AND NONE ANSWERED WHEN I CALLED OUT.

NO DOUBT YOU WERE STILL IN THE *SHOWER* AT THE TIME AND DIDN'T HEAR.

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF--

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!



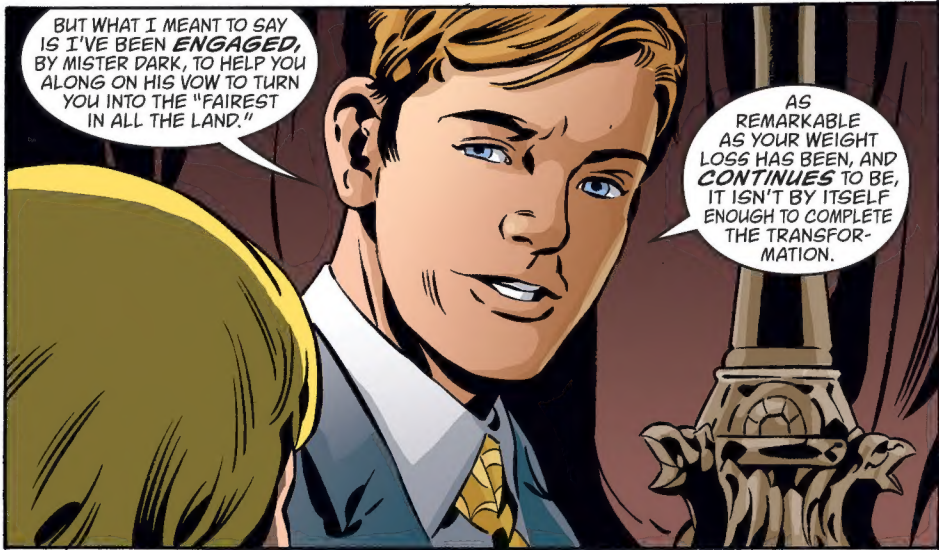
YES, EXACTLY.

AS I WAS SAYING, I'M WERIAN HOLT, ESQUIRE. AS OUR MUTUAL BENEFACTOR PROMISED--



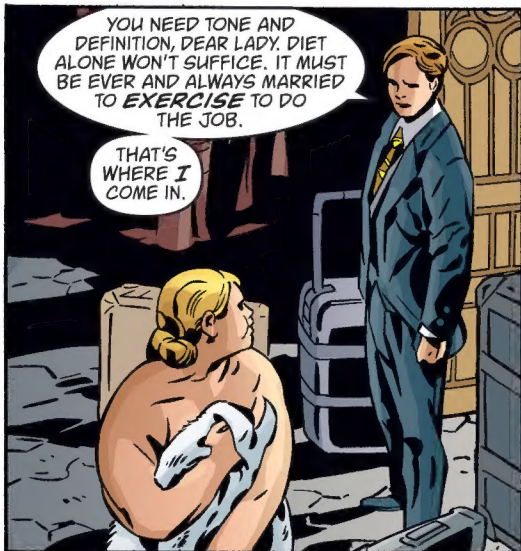
YOU'RE MY HANDSOME PRINCE?

AH--WELL, THANK YOU, MADAM. THAT'S QUITE FLATTERING.



BUT WHAT I MEANT TO SAY IS I'VE BEEN **ENGAGED**, BY MISTER DARK, TO HELP YOU ALONG ON HIS VOW TO TURN YOU INTO THE "FAIREST IN ALL THE LAND."

AS REMARKABLE AS YOUR WEIGHT LOSS HAS BEEN, AND **CONTINUES** TO BE, IT ISN'T BY ITSELF ENOUGH TO COMPLETE THE TRANSFORMATION.



YOU NEED TONE AND DEFINITION, DEAR LADY. DIET ALONE WON'T SUFFICE. IT MUST BE EVER AND ALWAYS MARRIED TO **EXERCISE** TO DO THE JOB.

THAT'S WHERE I COME IN.



SO--?



I'M YOUR FENCING INSTRUCTOR.









I GET IDENTICAL RESULTS FROM TESTING BEAST. HE'D BE FINE IF HE DIDN'T HAVE BEAUTY AND BLISS TO WORRY ABOUT.

SO WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?



ISN'T THAT OBVIOUS? REMOVE SNOW, BEAUTY AND BLISS FROM DANGER. TRANSPORT THEM TO THE NORTH WIND'S CASTLE, WHERE THE CUBS ARE ALREADY SAFELY KEPT.

I CAN'T DO THAT.



OF COURSE YOU CAN. EVEN WITH ALL YOUR DISTRACTIONS, YOU *STILL* HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO TRANSPORT ONLY THREE SOULS.

I EXAMINED YOU MYSELF, BEFORE EVEN APPROACHING YOU WITH THE IDEA.



HOW DARE YOU TAKE IT ON YOURSELF TO POKE AND PROD ABOUT OUR KING WITH YOUR WITCHY WAYS?!

I NEITHER POKED NOR PRODDED, MR. SMITH. I DID IT ALL FROM A DISTANCE AND FLYCATCHER DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IT WAS OCCURRING.



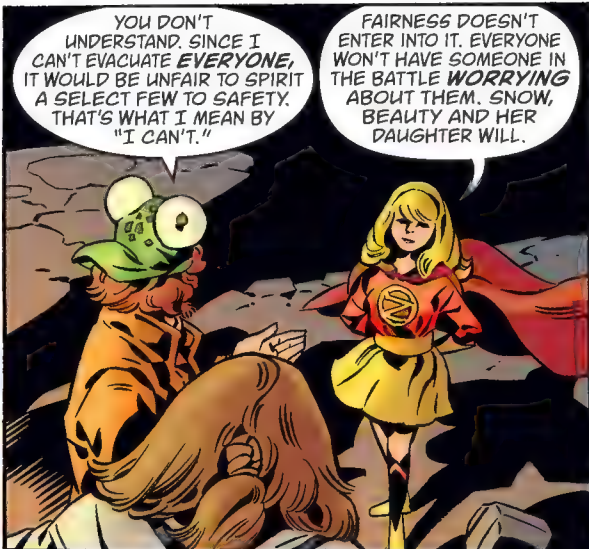
EXACTLY MY POINT!

WEYLAND!

SETTLE DOWN, PLEASE.

ONE PROBLEM AT A TIME.





YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. SINCE I CAN'T EVACUATE **EVERYONE**, IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO SPIRIT A SELECT FEW TO SAFETY. THAT'S WHAT I MEAN BY "I CAN'T."

FAIRNESS DOESN'T ENTER INTO IT. EVERYONE WON'T HAVE SOMEONE IN THE BATTLE **WORRYING** ABOUT THEM. SNOW, BEAUTY AND HER DAUGHTER WILL.



IT'S NOT REALLY ABOUT THE SAFETY OF A FEW. I COULDN'T CARE LESS. MY **SOLE** CONCERN IS THE FEARLESSNESS OF OUR COMBATANTS.

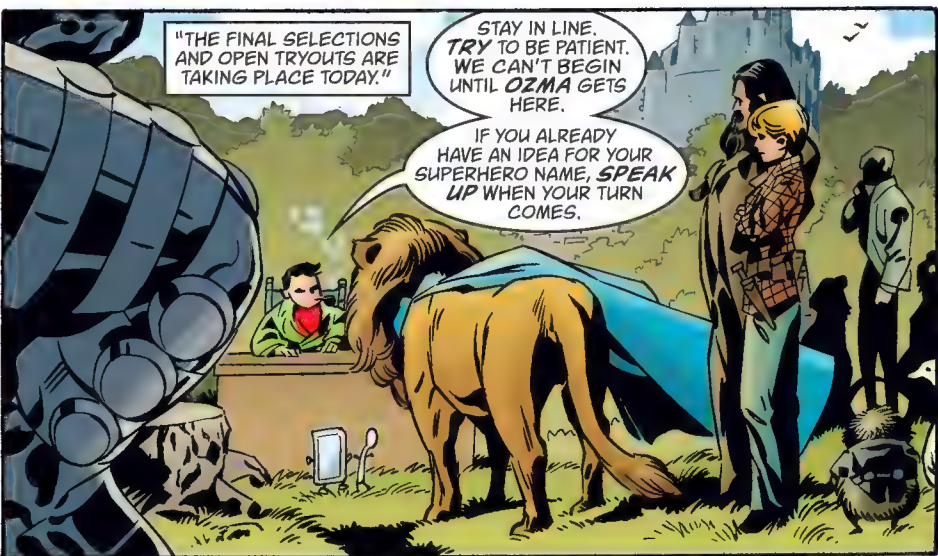
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO **EMPOWER** MISTER DARK EVEN AS WE'RE TRYING TO WEAR HIM DOWN.



I'LL CONSIDER YOUR REQUEST, MISS OZMA.

HAVE YOU FINALIZED THE REST OF YOUR TEAM?

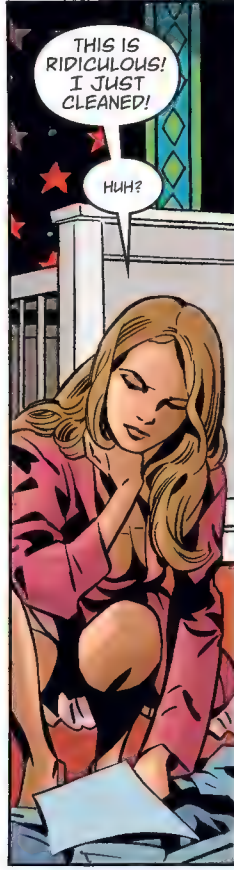
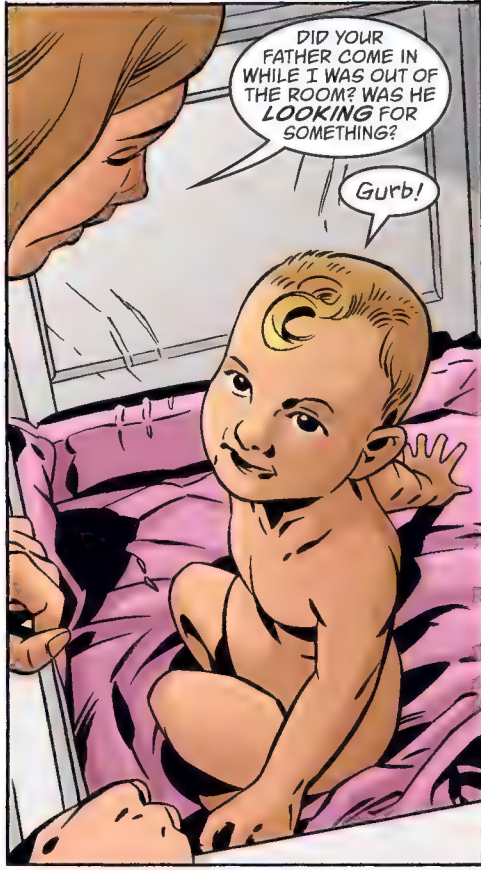
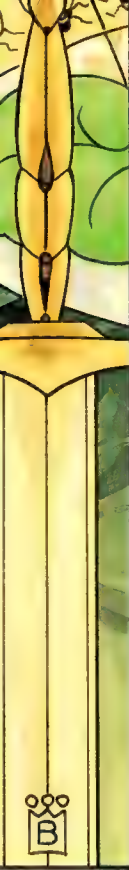
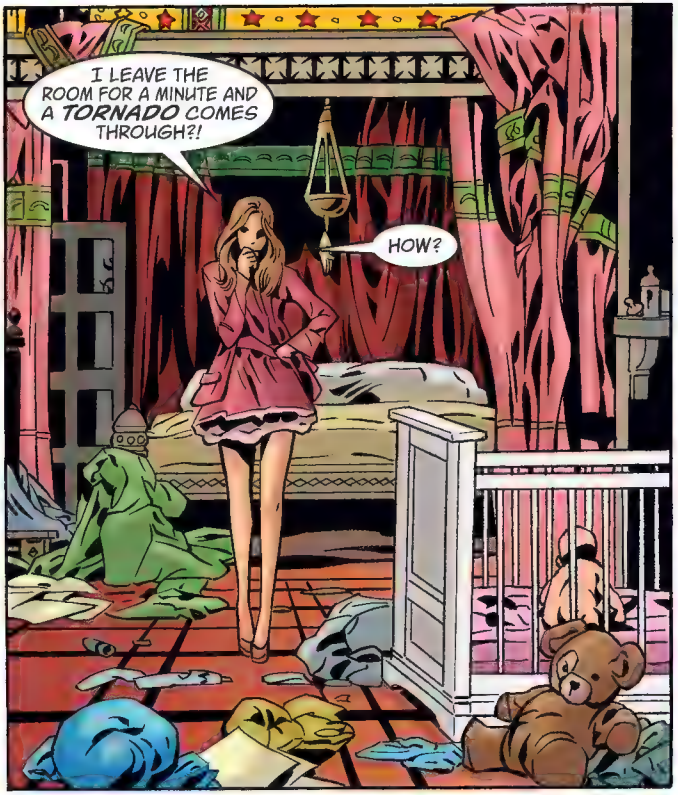
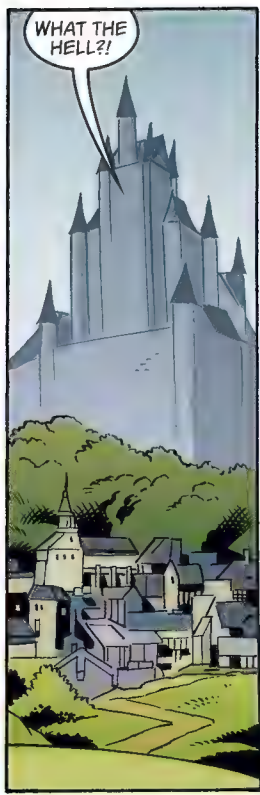
NEARLY.



"THE FINAL SELECTIONS AND OPEN TRYOUTS ARE TAKING PLACE TODAY."

STAY IN LINE. TRY TO BE PATIENT. WE CAN'T BEGIN UNTIL **OZMA** GETS HERE.

IF YOU ALREADY HAVE AN IDEA FOR YOUR SUPERHERO NAME, **SPEAK UP** WHEN YOUR TURN COMES.



A BIT LATER IN THE DAY...

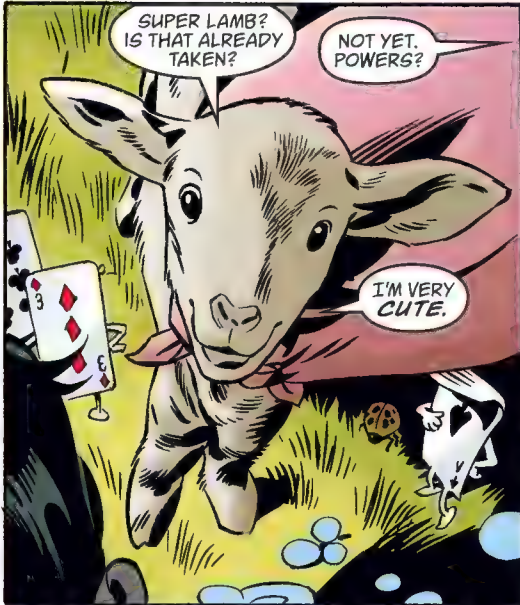


NAME?

BONNY LAMB.

OR MAYBE BONNY LAMB PEEP, SINCE I'M ONE OF BO PEEP'S FLOCK.

NOT YOUR REAL NAME. YOUR SUPERHERO NAME.



SUPER LAMB? IS THAT ALREADY TAKEN?

NOT YET. POWERS?

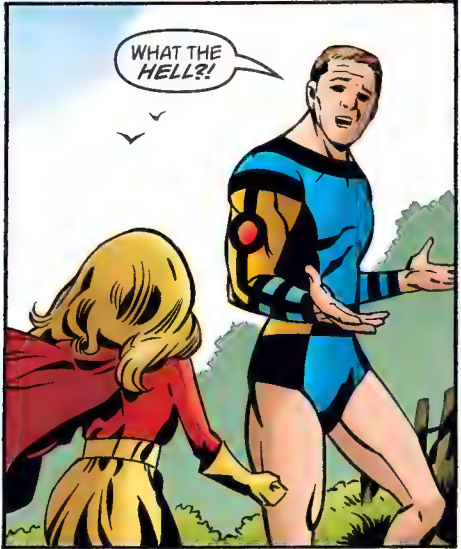
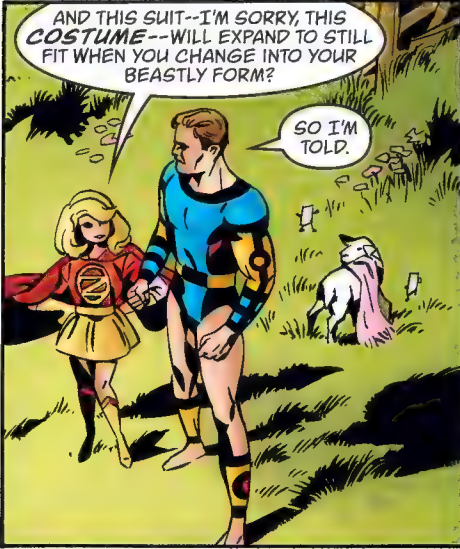
I'M VERY CUTE.

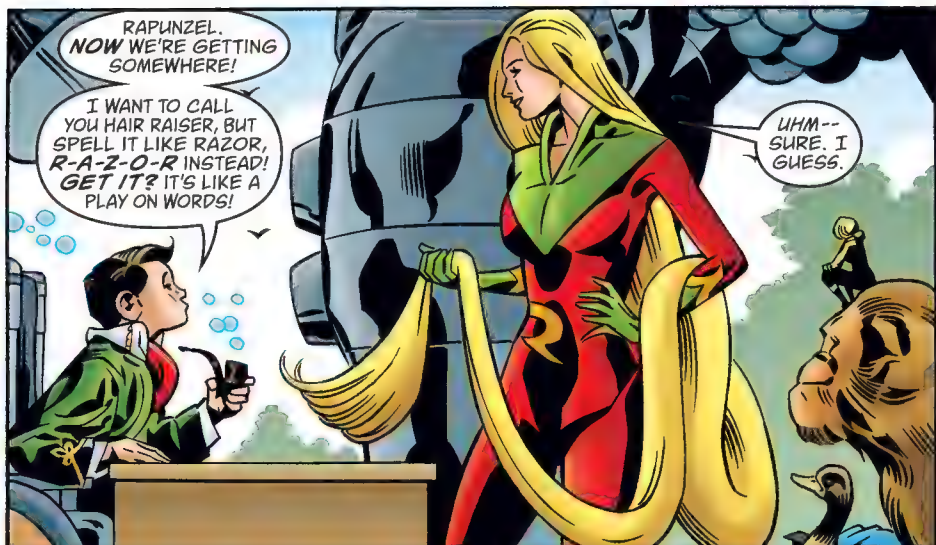


SORRY, BUT THAT'S NOT--

LOOK, FOLKS, WE ONLY WANT COMBAT USEFUL POWERS!

NEXT!





RAPUNZEL.  
NOW WE'RE GETTING  
SOMEWHERE!

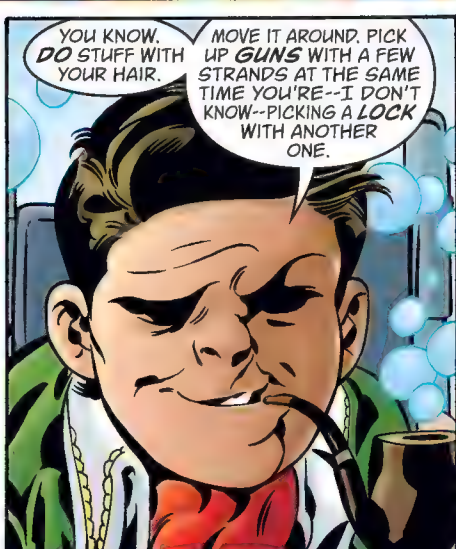
I WANT TO CALL  
YOU HAIR RAISER, BUT  
SPELL IT LIKE RAZOR,  
R-A-Z-O-R INSTEAD!  
GET IT? IT'S LIKE A  
PLAY ON WORDS!

UHM--  
SURE. I  
GUESS.



SO, SHOW  
US WHAT YOU  
CAN DO.

WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN?



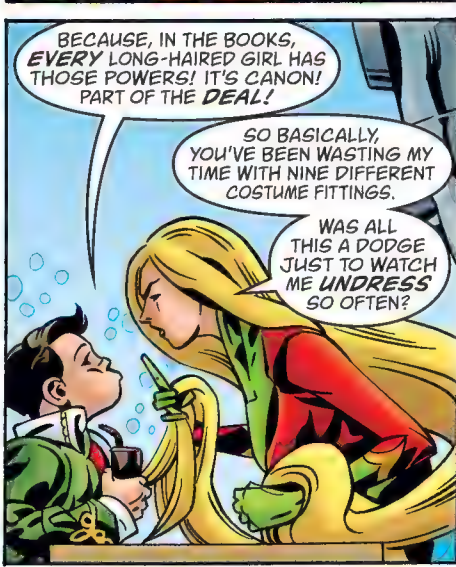
YOU KNOW,  
DO STUFF WITH  
YOUR HAIR.

MOVE IT AROUND, PICK  
UP GUNS WITH A FEW  
STRANDS AT THE SAME  
TIME YOU'RE--I DON'T  
KNOW--PICKING A LOCK  
WITH ANOTHER  
ONE.



ARE YOU UNDER  
THE IMPRESSION THAT  
MY HAIR CAN MOVE ABOUT  
ON ITS OWN?

WHY WOULD  
YOU ASSUME  
THAT?



BECAUSE, IN THE BOOKS,  
EVERY LONG-HAIRED GIRL HAS  
THOSE POWERS! IT'S CANON!  
PART OF THE DEAL!

SO BASICALLY,  
YOU'VE BEEN WASTING MY  
TIME WITH NINE DIFFERENT  
COSTUME FITTINGS.

WAS ALL  
THIS A DODGE  
JUST TO WATCH  
ME UNDRESS  
SO OFTEN?

**AT THE FORTRESS OF THE NORTH WIND...**

BRAN THE BEAR REARED UP AND **ROARED** HIS BATTLE CHALLENGE!

HE SWATTED ONE SOLDIER TO THE **LEFT** AND ONE SOLDIER TO THE **RIGHT**, LEAVING SIR BLUSTER ALL ON HIS **OWN**.

SIR BLUSTER DROPPED HIS SWORD AND TURNED TO RUN AWAY, HOPING TO **LIVE** AND FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.

BUT BRAN THE BEAR HAD **OTHER** PLANS. WITH ONE LAST **SWIPE** OF HIS MIGHTY PAW, HE BROUGHT AN **END** TO BOTH THE MALICIOUS KNIGHT'S LIFE AND THIS **STORY**.

COOL!

OH, NO! THAT POOR MAN!

THE END.

READ ANOTHER ONE, GRAMPAW!

READ THE **NEXT** ONE, WHERE BRAN THE BEAR FIGHTS THE **DRAGON**!

NO, READ SOMETHING WITH **GIRLS** IN IT NEXT! THE PRETTY **PRINCESS**!

NO, I'M SORRY, CHILDREN, BUT WE'VE NO MORE TIME FOR STORIES TODAY. YOUR GRANDFATHER HAS IMPORTANT **DUTIES** TO ATTEND TO.

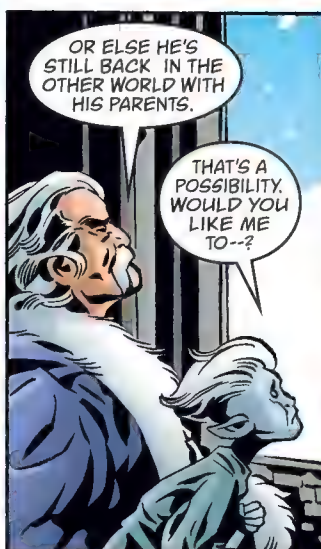
SHIT!

I MEAN **SHUCKS**! I CLEARLY SAID **SHUCKS**!

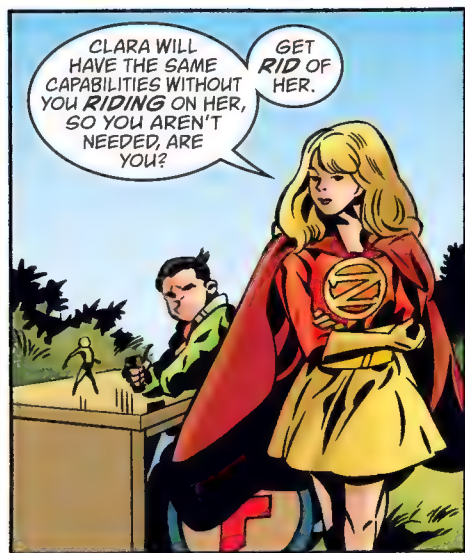
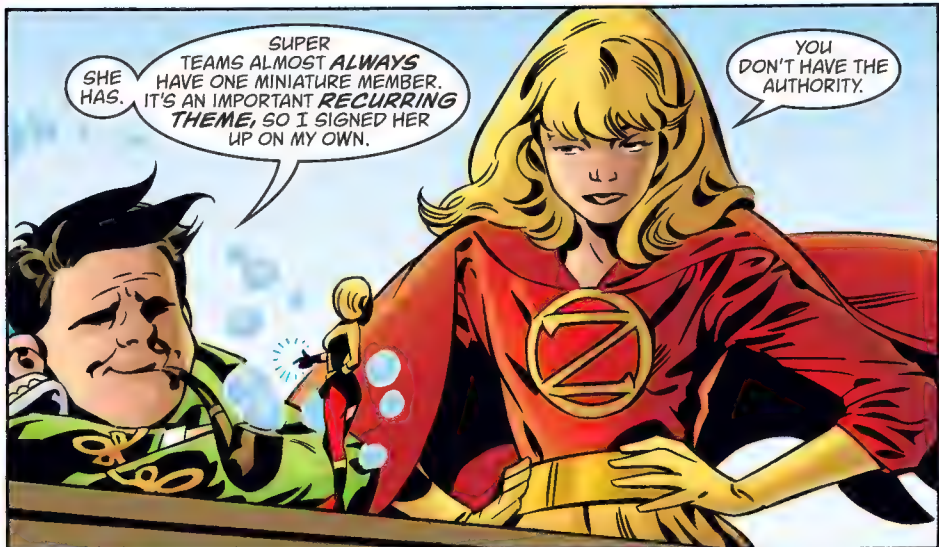
NO PENALTY **THIS** TIME, DARIEN. WE'LL PRESUME "**SHUCKS**" WAS INTENDED.

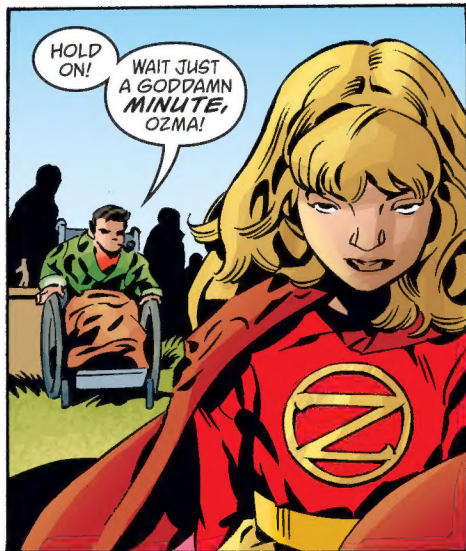
I HOPE ALL OF YOU KNOW HOW MUCH YOUR GRANDFATHER **LOVES** YOU. I'D NEVER INTENTIONALLY HURT ANY OF YOU.











HOLD ON!  
WAIT JUST A GODDAMN MINUTE, OZMA!



YOU CAN'T JUST *DISMISS* HER LIKE THAT! YOU CAN'T TREAT PEOPLE THAT WAY!

WHY NOT? SHE'S OF NO *USE* TO US.

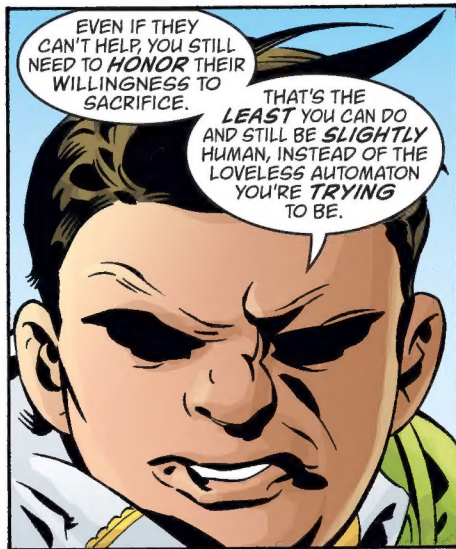
NONE OF THOSE STILL IN LINE ARE ANY GOOD, SO WE'RE *DONE* WITH RECRUITING.



I'VE SETTLED ON THE FINAL GROUP.

YOU CAN'T TREAT FOLKS SO CALLOUSLY, YOU LITTLE WITCH.

THEY'RE ALL SCARED TO DEATH AND KNOW WE HAVE JUST ABOUT *ZERO* CHANCE OF BEATING THE DARK MAN, AND YET THEY *STILL* STEPPED UP TO VOLUNTEER.



EVEN IF THEY CAN'T HELP, YOU STILL NEED TO *HONOR* THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE.

THAT'S THE *LEAST* YOU CAN DO AND STILL BE *SLIGHTLY* HUMAN, INSTEAD OF THE LOVELESS AUTOMATON YOU'RE *TRYING* TO BE.



I WARNED YOU BEFORE ABOUT CALLING ME NAMES.

BIG DEAL! TURN ME INTO A TOAD, OR A COCKROACH, OR ANYTHING ELSE! THAT WOULD *STILL* MAKE ME A HUNNERT-THOUSAND TIMES BETTER'N YOU!



WE'RE *DONE* TALKING. GO AWAY.

INCIDENTALLY, YOU DIDN'T MAKE THE TEAM EITHER.

THAT'S IT, THEN!



WOW.

YOU'LL BE FORMIDABLE INDEED IN THAT, Y'HIGHNESS!

**NEXT: THE NORTH WIND REALLY BLOWS!**

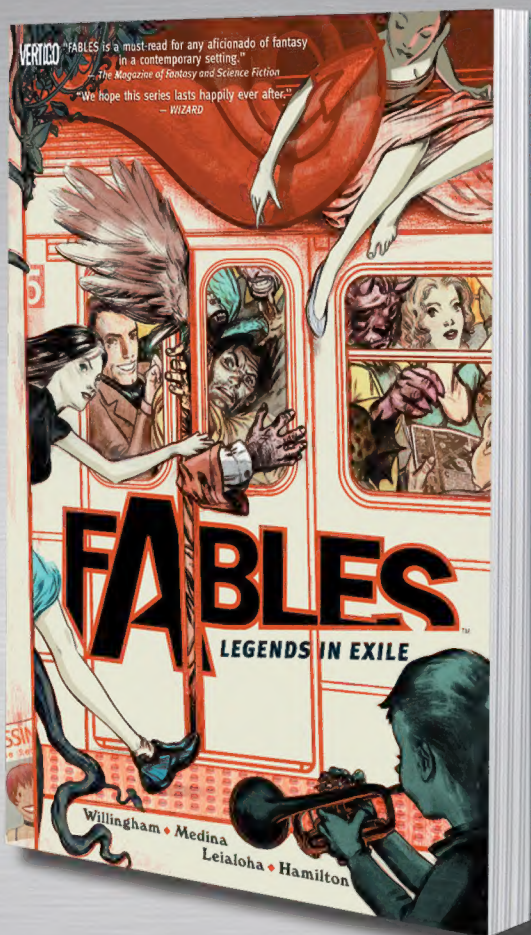
"FABLES is an excellent series in the tradition of SANDMAN, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty." – ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

# BILL WILLINGHAM

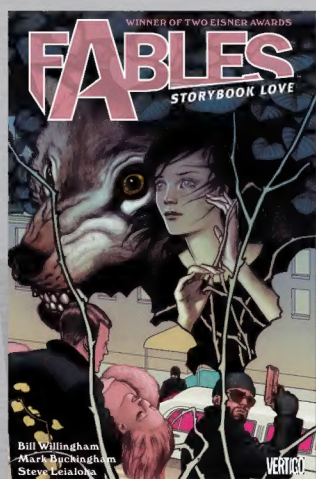
"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York."  
– THE WASHINGTON POST



- VOL. 1: LEGENDS IN EXILE
- VOL. 2: ANIMAL FARM
- VOL. 3: STORYBOOK LOVE
- VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS
- VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS
- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
- VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES
- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



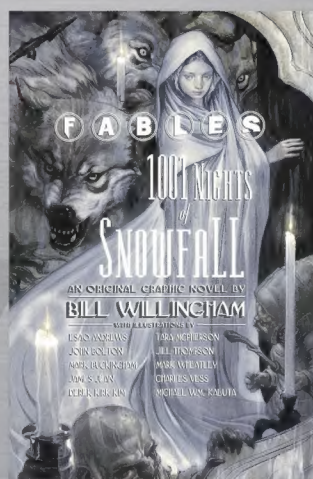
FABLES VOL. 3:  
STORYBOOK LOVE



FABLES VOL. 6:  
HOMELANDS



FABLES:  
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



Use the **BUY IN PRINT** feature to find a comics shop near you.  
Check back here every week for **NEW DIGITAL RELEASES!**

Suggested for Mature Readers



NATHAN